

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph bridging pages 7 and 8 with the following amended paragraph:

100 g of laponite was stirred in 5 liters (ℓ) of water for 30 minutes to produce a good dispersion. A solution of iron chloride and/or aluminum chloride was added dropwise to a base (sodium carbonate and/or a solid sodium hydroxide solution respectively) to obtain a base/metal ratio of 2 to 2.4. The oligomeric solutions obtained were allowed to stand for a period of 1 to 7 days. These aged Al/Fe solutions were added, with stirring, to the previously prepared clay suspension. The excess oligomeric solution was eliminated by centrifuging, then the residue was washed with distilled water until the chlorides had been eliminated. The product obtained was either dried at ambient temperature or at a slightly elevated temperature of 60°C, or freeze-dried. The dry product was then heated for 3 hours at 300°C to produce a bridged clay. The nanocomposite was prepared by introducing 100 g of Escorene 1004 polyethylene into the mixer and 10 g of bridged laponite ~~bridged~~ under the conditions described in Example 2.